

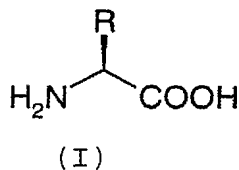
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1: (Currently Amended) A process for preparing enantiomerically enriched L- α -amino acids or their salts, comprising reacting the corresponding 2-ketocarboxylic acid with an ammonium ion donor in the presence of a whole-cell catalyst comprising a cloned gene encoding a cofactor-dependent amino acid dehydrogenase and a cloned gene encoding ~~an enzyme~~ glucose dehydrogenase that regenerates the cofactor, at a total input of substrate per reaction volume of ≥ 500 mM, the addition of the substrate being metered such that the stationary concentration of 2-ketocarboxylic acid is less than 500 mM and the external addition of cofactor, based on the total input of substrate, corresponds to < 0.0001 equivalents.

Claim 2: (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1,
wherein no cofactor is added to the reaction mixture.

Claim 3: (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1,
wherein the 2 ketocarboxylic is one that will yield an amino acid of the general
formula (I)



in which R is alkyl, ~~in particular a space-filling branched alkyl group that exhibits a~~
~~tertiary C atom and possesses 5-10 C atoms, for example tert-butyl, or substituted alkyl.~~

Claim 4: The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the substrate is metered in accordance with a fed batch process.

Claim 5: (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the 2-ketocarboxylic acid is kept at a maximum stationary concentration of less than 450 mM, ~~very preferably of less than 400 mM.~~

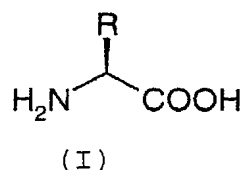
Claim 6: (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein before it is used, the whole-cell catalyst is pretreated such that the permeability of the cell membrane for the substrate and products is increased as compared with the intact system.

Claim 7 (New) The process as claimed in claim 3, wherein R is a space-filling branched alkyl group that exhibits a tertiary C atom and possesses 5-10 carbon atoms.

Claim 8 (New) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein R is a tert-butyl or substituted alkyl.

Claim 9 (New) The process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the 2-ketocarboxylic acid is kept at a maximum stationary concentration of less than 400 mM.

Claim 10 (New) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the 2 ketocarboxylic is one that will yield an amino acid of the general formula (I)



in which R is alkyl.

Claim 11 (New): The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the substrate is metered in accordance with a fed batch process.

Claim 12: (New) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the 2-ketocarboxylic acid is kept at a maximum stationary concentration of less than 450 mM.

Claim 13: (New) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein before it is used, the whole-cell catalyst is pretreated such that the permeability of the cell membrane for the substrate and products is increased as compared with the intact system.

Claim 14 (New) The process as claimed in claim 10, wherein R is a space-filling branched alkyl group that exhibits a tertiary C atom and possesses 5-10 carbon atoms.

Claim 15 (New) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein R is a tert-butyl or substituted alkyl.

Claim 16 (New) The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the 2-ketocarboxylic acid is kept at a maximum stationary concentration of less than 400 mM.